

CLAIMS

1. An article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction including lid and base forming sections (1, 2) of such construction as to be shape wise self supporting in the absence of a perimeter frame and side, base or back panels
5 whereby the form of the case is established and maintained by the moulded lid and base sections.
2. An article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction including lid and base forming sections (1, 2) of such moulded form as to be shape wise self supporting in the absence of a perimeter frame and side, base or back panels
10 whereby the form of the case is established and maintained by the moulded lid and base sections.
3. An article of luggage as claimed in claim 1 or 2, and characterised in that the case construction does not rely upon the use of corner supports and/or additional side panel forming boards.
- 15 4. An article of luggage as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3 and characterised in that the case construction incorporates a carrying handle (24) together with a towing handle (assembly (9) and associated handling support wheels (12).
5. An article of luggage as claimed in any one of claims 1, 2, 3 or 4, and characterised in that the lid forming and base forming sections (1, 2) incorporate
20 corrugations/recesses (4) so positioned as to counteract wrinkling at the corners of the mouldings.
6. An article of luggage as claimed in claim 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and characterised in that the lid and base sections (1, 2) are moulded from a foamed plastics material such as that known as EVA.

- 12 -

7. An article of luggage as claimed in any one of the preceding claims 1 to 6, and characterised in that the lid and base sections (1, 2) are externally covered by fabric material shaped to conform closely to the external form of the lid and base sections.
- 5 8. An article of luggage as claimed in any one of the preceding claims 1 to 7, and characterised in that the two moulded sections (1, 2) are connected together by means including a zip fastener arrangement (3) adapted for enabling the hinging of the two sections (1, 2) with respect to each other and to provide opening an closing facility to the case.
- 10 9. An article of luggage as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, and characterised in that in order to provide capability of volume expansion of the case the zip fastener arrangement incorporates two separately operable zip fasteners (3A, 3B), there being a gusset (3C) provided between the zipping portions (13,14) of one of the fasteners (3A) that is associated with volume
15 expansion the arrangement being such that the volume of the case can be increased by appropriate operation of said one of the fasteners.
- 20 10. An article of luggage as claimed in claim 9, and characterised in that in order to provide capability of a multiple volume expansion facility the zip fastener arrangement incorporates additional zip fasteners each having associated therewith an expansion gusset whereby operation of a zip fastener associated with a gusset enables appropriate volume expansion.
11. An article of luggage as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 10, and characterised by the provision of a pair of wheels at one end of the base section. there being one such wheel to each corner of said end.
- 25 12. An article of luggage as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 10, , and characterised by the provision of a first pair of wheel assemblies (12) at one end

- 13 -

of the base section (2) and a second pair of wheel assemblies at the corresponding end of the lid section (1),

13. An article of luggage as claimed in claim 12, and characterised in that the wheel assemblies (12) are so located on their respective sections as to lie at the corners of a rectangle.

14. An article of luggage as claimed in any one of claims 8 to 13, and characterised by runs of piping (17) such as to provide stiffness to the Zip fastener arrangement (3).

15 An article of luggage as claimed in claim 14 and characterised in that the piping (17) is stiffened by an internally provided wire (not shown) extending lengthways of the piping.

16. An article of luggage as claimed in claim 14 or 15, and characterised by piping (17) provided in the join between the zip fastener portion (13) and the lid section (1), between the zipping portion (14) of fastener (3A) and the zipping portion (15) of fastener (3B) and between the zipping portion (16) and the base section (2). If desired one or more runs of the piping can be omitted.

17. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction characterised by the steps of moulding from a material exhibiting soft' case characteristics lid forming and base forming sections (1, 2) of such construction as to be shape wise self supporting in the absence of a perimeter frame and side, base or back panels whereby the form of the case is established and maintained by the moulded lid and base sections (1,2).

- 14 -

18. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in claim 17, and characterised in that an opening (7) is provided at one end (8) of the case to define the location for the mounting of a towing handle arrangement (9) for the case.

5 19. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in claim 17 or 18, and characterised in that an indentation (11) is provided at each corner of the other end (10) of the base section of case to define mounting locations for a pair of wheels assemblies (12).

10 20. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in any one of claims 17, or 18, and characterised in that indentations (11) are provided at each corner of the other ends (10) of the base and lid sections to define mounting locations for two wheel assemblies (12) in lid section (1) and for two wheel assemblies (12) at said other end of the base section (2).

15 21. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in any one of claims 17 to 20, and characterised in that corrugations/recesses (4) are provided at the corner regions (5) of the case.

20 22. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in any one of claims 17 to 21 and characterised in that the lid and base sections are moulded from a foamed plastics material such as known as EVA.

25 23. A method of producing and article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in any one of the preceding claims 11 to 22, and characterised in that the two moulded sections (1, 2) are connected together by means including a zip fastener arrangement (3) adapted for enabling the hinging

- 15 -

of the two sections (1, 2) with respect to each other and to provide opening and closing facility to the case.

24. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in any one of the preceding claims 17 to 23, and characterised in that capability of volume expansion of the case the is provided
5 by the zip fastener arrangement (3) incorporating two separately operable zip fasteners (3A, 3B), there being a gusset (3C) provided between the zipping portions (13,14) of one of the fasteners (3A) that is associated with volume expansion the arrangement being such that the volume of the case can be
10 increased by appropriate operation of said one of the fasteners.

25. A method of producing an article of luggage characterised by a 'soft' case construction as claimed in any one of the preceding claims 17 to 24, and characterised in that capability of selective multiple volume expansion of the case the zip fastener arrangement incorporates additional zip fasteners each
15 having associated therewith an expansion gusset (3C) whereby operation of a zip fastener associated with a gusset enables appropriate volume expansion.